Subject: Chat with Antonio M. Elias
From: "Antonio M. Elias" <antoniomelias@gmail.com>
To: barriticus@gmail.com

11:19 PM **Antonio**: sorry I haven't gotten back to you sooner on the debates story
11:20 PM My Deputy CM does most of the traditional media stuff and has been working on this story
11:22 PM and lately
11:23 PM Forbes' response to our challenges
has been beyond pathetic
it's been truly unproffessional
more than one local newspaper has contacted the Forbes campaign on why he won't debate
11:24 PM and both times the answer was "we'll get back to you on that"
and then they never call the paper back
they don't have a message, so as a result they're snubbing journalists
just truly bad form - bad for them really
11:25 PM **me**: right
11:26 PM do you think that LeGrow has enough televised presence to make a short video announcing a question a day come off well?
if not, we could just do the question a day and announce it with a press release
11:27 PM **Antonio**: I don't think the youtube video plan would work
last time we tried to do an intro video
I'm not exaggerating it took about 40+ takes
11:28 PM **me**: what if I were to write up a press release sample for your consideration, then?
Antonio: and we're just slammed here with fundraising and events across the district
that would be great
and
you ought to talk to Evan
me: okay, I'll go ahead and do that
Antonio: let me forward you the press release he put out
11:29 PM **me**: okay
11:31 PM As for Farley, he'll assist in all this and other matters for free but he'll want you to sign - or rather just electronically agree - to a statement that he
and his company are serving as consultants to the campaign
Antonio: alright
me: as it's a newish firm and he wants some street cred for future racrs
races
Antonio: oh certainly
11:32 PM **me**: ok, I gave him your e-mail, they'll be in touch soon

Antonio: we'd be more than happy to consider it an in-kind contribution
great
what kind of consulting are they?
media?

11:33 PM **me**: no, although he actually did use to advise films in which math is involved in the plot - to the extent that films still have plots - to ensure that the math is correct; he's an award-winning mathematician

Antonio: fascinating
I had to take calculus like 3 times
so
certainly not my thing

me: and the firm is pretty much just him and his brother, who's a patent lawyer; both are working with me on my Africa Development Program under Project PM

11:35 PM oh, and also one other person

11:37 PM he's also done some work for the government creating software that uses probability or some such to predict terrorist attacks

11:39 PM **Antonio**: normally it's my deputy that dreams big for us, but out of curiosity - do you think any "celebrity" atheists would want to lend a good word to us?

11:41 PM **me**: sorry, was outside smoking

11:42 PM yes
and that's one of the other things I'll be moving on this weekend
Alan Dershowitz provided a blurb for my first book and I've got his e-mail
I'll write to him and see what he can do

11:43 PM I've only talked to him very briefly thus far
also
I'll see about Bill Maher

Antonio: yeah
we got through to his staff a while back
perhaps a month ago
they said we had a neat story
but he was booked for months - at least in terms of Wynne going on the show

11:44 PM the disadvantage of only being once a week I suppose

me: I was just discussing the Maher option with Farley; would LeGrow be able to take advantage of a television appearance?

Antonio: well
Wynne watches Maher religiously (sorry, bad pun)
and always talks about how Maher has specifically encouraged atheists to run for office

me: actually
I've been on Fox News once

Antonio: haha
I'm sure Wynne would do that too

11:45 PM **me**: in the context of my position as spokesperson for Enlighten the Vote
Antonio: if anything it would increase our hate-mail quota which might be fun
oh great
me: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s12Z9slWq3A
I've still got producer's e-mail, I'll write him now
11:46 PM **Antonio**: haha
awesome
I really like that clip
11:47 PM I'm going to try to get you footage
of Forbes' representative at the recent NAACP meeting
Forbes literally is in hiding
he's at this event every year
Antonio: and skipped it now all of a sudden
Antonio: but had his local guy speak on his behalf
Antonio: I haven't seen the footage, but Wynne described it as "nauseating"
Antonio: apparently at the end he goes off the prepared remarks
Antonio: and says that "there's no reason to talk about religion in this race BUT Randy is a Christian, always has been, and he doesn't have anything wrong with non-Christians, but thinks we should all be allowed to sing 'God bless America' and recite the pledge of Allegiance"
Antonio: well thanks for that Ms. Palin I wasn't sure if I was still allowed to sing songs now that I'm working for an atheist
me: yeah, I saw clip of Randy on House floor pretending that school prayer is illegal, as they all do
Antonio: wow
Antonio: I'm watching the rest of that clip
Antonio: that minister is terrible
Antonio: he pulls out every trick in the book
me: yeah, he's kind of iocompetent
Antonio: I mean
Antonio: yeah
me: you may notice me doing an insulting gesture with my cheek and tongue at some point
me: my heart wasn't really in it
Antonio: a majority of the Founding Fathers were practicing Christians - doesn't that make it *more* noteable that they fail to mention Christianity in the Constitution?
me: I'll be back in a moment, going to grab some more beer
Antonio: good
me: most were indeed officially Christians, but Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, and of course Paine were deists
me: Jefferson and Paine were actually accused of being atheists
Antonio: well
Antonio: Franklin was a crazy motherfucker

me: yep
Antonio: one person commented
Antonio: when Wynne claimed to be the first non-incumbent atheist to run for Congress (a fact we were told by the Secular Coalition)
Antonio: how we didn't know that some nonbeliever unitarian wasn't a congressperson from Massachusetts back in the 1830's when people didn't ask about a politician's religion
Antonio: and frankly I don't know
Antonio: and I believe it was John Quincy Adams who did not swear in on a Bible
Antonio: because he was a devout Christian and thought it was insulting to both government and religion to sully one with the other
Antonio: or something like that
me: funny story- that rep. from michigan, ellison I believe, who's a Muslim, attracted a lot of negative attention from the Fox/Mark Levin crowd since he'd be sworn in on a Qu'ran
me: so he used Thomas Jefferson's Qu'Ran
Antonio: haha
Antonio: well
Antonio: yeah
Antonio: the main politician who opposed that
Antonio: was Virgil Goode of Virginia
Antonio: who has since been unceremoniously replaced
me: also, do you have any polling data on this race? How far behind are we?
Antonio: Goode, btw, represented Monticello and UVA
Antonio: no polling data
Antonio: we dabbled with the idea of doing a crappy poll for $1000
me: screw it
Antonio: but it would have been next to worthless
Antonio: a scientific poll is $15,000
me: better to buy 20 radio spots
Antonio: agreed
Antonio: but
me: knowing the numbers don't help
Antonio: right
me: doesn't help, rather
Antonio: I have a friend who's running another long-shot race here in VA
Antonio: and they're swimming in cash
Antonio: and she's acting like a top-tier race
Antonio: but their district is worse than ours
Antonio: they did a poll - they're down 65-25
Antonio: it's a miserable year
Antonio: but
Antonio: I'm confident in our strategy
Antonio: Wynne is a liberal guy, personally

Antonio: and in a non-competitive district, in an off year
Antonio: independents will have lower turnout than anyone
Antonio: so we're just tearing into the base
Antonio: basically a 2-month long get out the vote effort
Antonio: it's relatively cheap
Antonio: and it's the best we can do
me: right
Antonio: if we win, or do better than expected, we make history saying atheism doesn't matter to voters
me: I'm trying various avenues by which to get volunteers for phone banking
Antonio: if we get crushed - we can always say the voters weren't ready for an atheist
me: right
Antonio: I can't stress how crucial the phone banks are
Antonio: we have huge swaths of the district that are rural and we can't go door-to-door
Antonio: and we're only targeting Dems who regularly vote
Antonio: and
Antonio: the rural areas are some of the most Democratic
Antonio: they are heavily Black
Antonio: it's the white suburbs that do in Dems around here
me: I just tried to e-mail that producer at Fox but I got it returned, he must have moved on to another station
Antonio: good for him
Antonio: also
Antonio: completely between us - we don't want to tell people about something that isn't going to happen
Antonio: but we've been contacted by Countdown at MSNBC
Antonio: at first they were interested in having Wynne on with the Minister in Chesapeake
Antonio: the Minister agreed
Antonio: then backed out
Antonio: I talked to the producer again
Antonio: and she said it makes our story somewhat less interesting
Antonio: but we're still on their radar
Antonio: and she'll call back Monday
Antonio: so
Antonio: hopefully nothing interesting will happen
Antonio: as
Antonio: we'd be a spot for a slow news day
me: right
me: maybe you could recruit another opponent to appear with him to make it more interesting
Antonio: well
me: like that douchebag I debated

Antonio: Wynne's going to try the Minister again
Antonio: if he wants to go on national tv and say
Antonio: I won't vote for this man because of his religious beliefs
Antonio: hey, that's a story
me: right
me: I'm surprised he backed down
me: doesn't he have a ministry to propagate?
Antonio: he doesn't seem the confrontational type
Antonio: right
Antonio: I was kindof hoping he'd try to convert Wynne on-air
me: it would be better if Wynne could convince him to change HIS mind on air, as he seems prone to do that
Antonio: well
Antonio: we've already freaked out plenty of people
Antonio: they think they've never met an atheist in their life
Antonio: which is clearly false
Antonio: and then they do meet one
Antonio: and what? he's a nice, intelligent person?
Antonio: that's not what they told me in Sunday School!
Antonio: and
Antonio: I was on the phone with the Reverend today
Antonio: and he brought up "Christian leadership" and said "at a time like this with the wars and the killing going on, how can I support a non-Christian?"
Antonio: I told him it was my opinion that a lot of the wars and problems with the world is the fault of Christians who are doing very non-Christian things
Antonio: and he said "I don't know about that"
Antonio: so shit - not only is there no such thing as a benevolent atheist, there's no such thing as a bad Christian
Antonio: that's just dangerous
Antonio: that said - he said that religion aside, there's no way he's supporting a Republican
Antonio: so
Antonio: I guess he might just not vote
Antonio: what part of Texas did you say you were from?
me: my mom's family is from the Mexican border
me: I'm from Dallas, ancestors were in Texas before it was U.S., but I've lived in Mexico, California, Tanzania, New Yotk
Antonio: hmm
Antonio: well
Antonio: you're certainly more cosmopolitan than me, I've lived in Virginia my whole life
Antonio: and I don't know anyone from Dallas
Antonio: I have friends from Houston and the People's republic of Austin
me: is this you first campaign?

me: yeah, I lived in Austin for six years on and off
Antonio: no, I've done other campaigns in VA
Antonio: 1st Congressional
Antonio: 34th House of Delegates
Antonio: and lots of volunteering throughout College
me: how does one go about getting into that business? volunteering first?
Antonio: pretty much
Antonio: then you kindof pick a niche
Antonio: Finance, Field, Communications, or the vague mass known as "political"
Antonio: they each have their benefits
Antonio: I chose finance
Antonio: I still am most comfortable with that - this is my first go as Manager
Antonio: and one does stay within a party
Antonio: but within a party you kindof need to be flexible for ideologies
Antonio: I like working for Wynne
Antonio: I am an idealist
Antonio: my last boss told me I was going to hell for not taking the Bible literally at every word
Antonio: I asked him if he stoned his parents for getting a divorce
Antonio: that shut him up quickly enough
Antonio: alright - we have early events tomorrow, so I'm calling it a night